



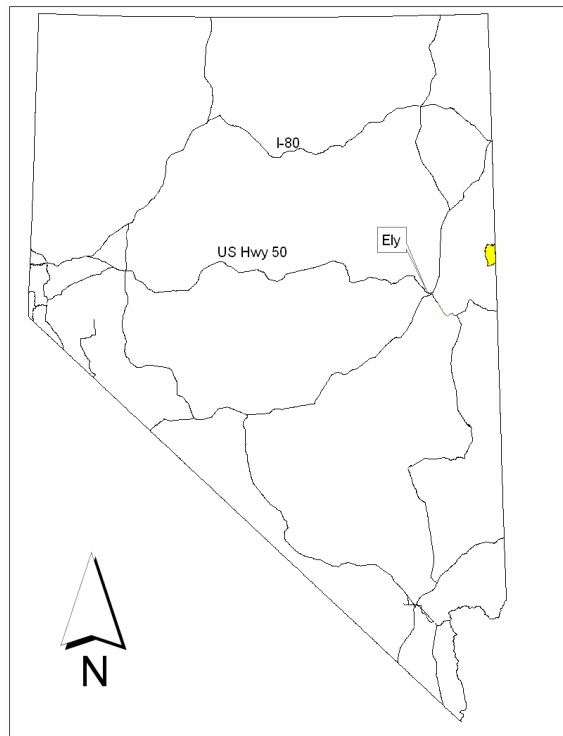
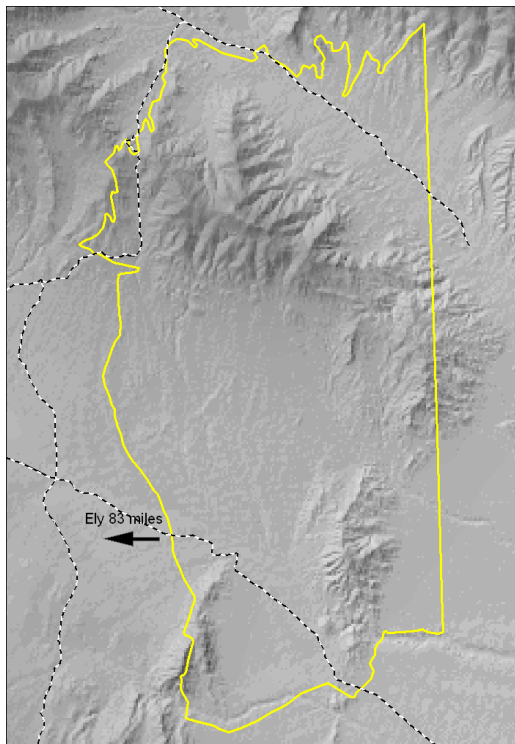
## Moriah Herd Management Area White Pine County



### Location/Habitat

The Moriah Herd Management Area (HMA) is located approximately 48 miles northeast as the crow flies, of Ely, Nevada, in White Pine County. Driving distance to the HMA from Ely is nearly 83 miles. The HMA comprises 53,417 acres of public land, with 1,635 acres of private land within the HMA boundaries. The northern boundary of the HMA starts in Pleasant Valley, goes over the east end of the Kern Mountains, and continues south to Indian George Wash. The western boundary of the HMA is near Tungstonia Wash, and the eastern boundary is the Utah/Nevada state line. A major gravel road travels through Pleasant Valley, and there is a second gravel road running east-west across the southern boundary of the HMA. The rest of the HMA can be accessed through numerous two-track roads. A small ranching-based community of less than 10 people is located in Pleasant Valley, and there are several other small communities across the state line in Utah.

Elevation in the Moriah HMA ranges from 9,468 feet at the top of the Kern Mountains, to 5,743 feet in Indian George Wash. Water within the HMA is limited. Watering sources include Tin Springs, Sulpher Spring, Upper Sulpher Spring, Indian Spring, Gravel Spring, and Cane Spring, as well as springs in Mallory Canyon and Tungstonia Wash.



The climate within the Moriah HMA is typical of the Great Basin. Summertime temperatures can occasionally reach greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, with normal highs in the mid-eighties. Winter temperatures can occasionally drop below zero degrees Fahrenheit, with normal lows being in the high single digits to the teens. Precipitation can range from less than eight inches in the valley bottoms to 20 inches in the Kern Mountains. Precipitation generally comes in the form of winter snowfall and spring rains, with occasional summer thunderstorms.

Wildlife in the area includes pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and elk. Other wildlife include mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats, kit foxes, and jackrabbits. The sagebrush valleys provide sage grouse habitat, and blue grouse can be found in the aspen/fir areas of the Kern Mountains. Bald eagles, Ferruginous hawks, and Peregrine falcons are sighted occasionally.

Moriah HMA has traditionally been grazed by domestic livestock including cattle and sheep, since the 1800s. Cattle and sheep grazing use continues today.

#### Vegetation

Vegetation within the HMA varies with elevation. Along the valley bottoms, salt desert shrub species can be found. However, the more common shrub species is sagebrush. As you move into the foothills, sagebrush gives way to pinyon-juniper woodlands. At the highest elevations, mountain mahogany and mountain sagebrush dominate, with small pockets of aspen and fir trees. Small riparian areas and their associated plant species occur throughout the HMA near seeps and springs.

#### Herd Description

Little is known about the history of the Moriah wild horse herd. The wild horses are likely to be the descendants of horses which escaped or were turned loose by ranchers, miners, and settlers. Likely breeds contributing to the herd include Quarterhorse, Thoroughbred, Morgan, and several draft breeds.

The Moriah wild horse herd is managed by the Ely Field Office for an appropriate management level of 1 to 29 wild horses, which was established in 2003. Wild horses move with the seasons, with some bands within the Moriah HMA summering on top of the Kern Mountains. When fall and winter come, snowfall pushes the horses to lower elevations. A year-round concentration area is around Tin Springs Mountain in the southeastern corner of the HMA. A majority of the wild horses move east off the HMA into the lower valley areas across the Utah state line during winter. While some migrate, other wild horses live off the HMA year-round. This has led to two gathers of horses outside the HMA in Utah during 1988 and 1995. In 2004, a gather occurred within the HMA. Horses within this herd are generally bay, brown, or sorrel in color, medium in build, and 13-15 hands tall.

